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THE HOUSE OF THE MARTYRS JOHN AND PAUL  
RECENTLY DISCOVERED ON THE COELIAN  
HILL AT ROME.\*

[PLATES IV, V, VI.]

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VI. SECONDARY PARTS OF THE HOUSE.

With the exception of the *tablinum*, which from its position and shape can easily be recognized in any Roman house, it is somewhat difficult to ascertain the use of the various chambers that have been excavated. In general, three groups have been distinguished: the family apartments, the chambers or sleeping-rooms of the servants, and the cells for domestic purposes. These three classes are easily to be recognized in this house, but it would not be possible, without indulging in useless conjectures, to attempt a detailed specification in each one. To the first class belong the eight large rooms behind the peristyle; to the second, several rooms on the lower floor near the *atria* and many of those on the two stories above.

The luxurious life of the great families in Rome required nothing less than an army of slaves. The *interni* who worked within the house, and the *externi* who worked without; the *ordinarii* who exercised the office of superintendence, and the *vulgares* whose offices were the most menial,<sup>1</sup> such as the *ostiarius*,<sup>2</sup> the *cubicularius*,<sup>3</sup> the *structor*,<sup>4</sup> the *lecticarius*,<sup>5</sup> the *focarius*,<sup>6</sup> the *pincerna*,<sup>7</sup> the *promus*,<sup>8</sup> and a hundred others.<sup>9</sup> All these were lodged within the palace. The wealthy learned, from Christian charity, to moderate the abuses of the system: still, they retained a large body of slaves. This fact alone can explain the size of the apartments for the domestics placed on all three of the stories in the house of the Coelian. Such are, on the lower story, sundry chambers near the *atrium* and the crypts, several of which I have explored

\* Continued from Vol. VI, page 285.

<sup>1</sup> ULPIANUS, *Digest.* XLVII. 10, 15 r; *ibid.*, 14, 4, 5.

<sup>2</sup> PETRONIUS, *Satir.*, 29.

<sup>4</sup> PETRONIUS, *op. cit.*, 35.

<sup>6</sup> ULPIANUS, *op. cit.*, IV. 9, 1.

<sup>8</sup> PLAUTUS, *Pseud.*, II., 2, 14 (608).

<sup>3</sup> CICERO, *Verr.* II., 3, 4.

<sup>5</sup> CICERO, *Epist. fam.*, IV. 12.

<sup>7</sup> ASCONIUS, *In Verr.* II., 1, 26.

<sup>9</sup> COLUMELLA, I. 9. 3; II. 13. 17.

but not cleared. Their height, as in general that of all the cells on the east side, being much less than elsewhere, the floor above them was not entirely destroyed when the basilica was erected. Over a space corresponding to one quarter of the area of the basilica toward the porch, a suite of chambers of various forms and sizes remain on this floor; but all are rude and plain, so that I have not been tempted to clear them. If I am not mistaken, this was the main portion of the apartment of the slaves, which, Cicero informs us (*Phil.* II., 27), consisted of many small cells placed in a row and called more properly *dormitoria*.

Nothing can be said of the stories that rose above the *parte nobile* or aristocratic section of the lower story, as they have been completely destroyed with the sole exception of the façade including the windows.

I shall pass to a description of the crypts and cells already mentioned, such as formed an important part of the Roman houses. The crypts were long and narrow galleries on the lower floor, closed on both sides and built either on the edge of a garden or along the wings of a portico or around any other part of the building. They served for pleasant strolls and meetings under cover in the warm hours of the day,<sup>10</sup> or for the storing of grains, fruits, and other articles that needed protection from atmospheric changes.<sup>11</sup> When these galleries are annexed to an *atrium* or peristyle, they are termed *cryptoporticus*: such a one is placed in our house on the side of the inner court that is in front of the *tablinum* and its neighboring rooms. For us, this is the most venerated part of the building, because here the two saintly owners were killed for the faith and buried by the soldiers of Terentianus. The half of its length which has been hitherto explored measures ten metres; and its width is about one metre and a half, at least from the *tablinum* onward, where the main staircase of the house is placed. The floor of this crypt, which is paved with polygons of lava, is on a somewhat lower level, as already noted. Its rude vault is a tunnel-vault modified by some lunettes. It is divided into two compartments through the construction of the staircase within it. At right angles to this runs a second crypt of equal width and at least nine metres long: both are without windows and were lighted by some doors which opened, apparently, upon the court.

<sup>10</sup> MURATORI, *Inscript.*, p. 481; REINESIUS, *Syntagm. Inscript.*, II. 28; SPARTIANUS, *Hadr.* 10.

<sup>11</sup> VITRUVIUS, VI. 5. 2; VARRO, *De re Rust.*, I. 57.

Through other passages, access was had to various contiguous cells whose use should be here explained.

The *cella* of a Roman house, speaking generally, is a storeroom for oil, wine, and such things: hence the epithets *olearia*, *vinaria*, etc.<sup>12</sup> These liquids were kept in vases usually of earthenware (*dolia*, *amphorae*, *seriae*), which were placed in rows against the walls or stuck in a bed of sand.<sup>13</sup> As such a method of keeping wine required a great amount of room and consequently many *cellae*, in the house of SS. John and Paul an entire wing on the ground-floor to the east is occupied by these cellars. They are at present reached from the point where the two described above meet, and they extend on every side in a network of small unadorned chambers communicating by vaulted passages of varying forms and sizes. None of them are paved, the floor being covered with a layer of sand, *doliis defossis*. In one of them is a square well with its parapet, or *puteal*, nearly as high as the vault, with the usual holes in the inner walls for the purpose of descending to draw water. It became necessary to raise the parapet to this height by means of an additional section, at the time that the level of the floor was raised by the bed of sand in order to turn it into a cellar. The vault of this room is quite black with smoke. The hearth or *focus* (CIC., *De Sen.*, 16) was here found, in pieces, under the rubbish, and it still contained the charcoal reduced to powder. On one of the walls is a pipe for hot water; that is, a large terracotta pipe placed within a rectangular shaft left in the wall, the pipe reappearing in the upper story on the opposite side of the wall. A similar conduit was found in the thickness of the vault of the neighboring cellar, but it had been deemed necessary to close it for reasons of solidity. A third conduit exists in the following chamber. High on the wall, opposite the door of the first of these chambers, is a small stone reservoir encased in the wall, from which it is separated by plates of lead to keep the dampness from the walls. This basin has a mouth for discharging the water. Here and on the floor above may have been the *torcularium*<sup>14</sup> for pressing the grapes, unless it be preferable to regard this whole region as serving in the beginning for bathing purposes, before it was turned into cellars. This cannot be determined until all

<sup>12</sup> VARRO, *De re Rust.*, I. 10, 13; I. 11, 12; COLUMELLA, XII. 18, 3, 4; I. 6, 9; CICERO, *De Senect.*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> PLINIUS, *Hist. Nat.*, XIV. 27; COLUMELLA, XII. 18. 5.

<sup>14</sup> COLUMELLA, XII. 18. 3; VITRUVIUS, VI. 6. 3.

the surrounding chambers are cleared on both stories. In a fourth room, the entire space between the two walls is occupied by another reservoir, made of bricks and cement, which rises thirty centimetres above the floor level and is coated, on the inside, with a good plastering of ground potsherds. In this room I have stuck in the sand-bed some of the many *amphorae* found in the whole row of cellars in order to give an example of the arrangement of a Roman wine-cellar. In 1789, there was found under the walls of Rome one of these wine-cellar divided into three compartments whose plan and description are given in Rich's Dictionary (art. *cella*). In many ways, this cellar on the Coelian resembles it, as it does those that are being excavated at Pompeii. At the entrance to the same chamber was found a *dolium* walled with mortar into an angle of the wall, but with its upper part broken off. These few words are all that can be said, as the excavation of this part is hardly begun.

In the same zone of cellars, toward the inner court, there opens a passage 90 cent. wide and about two metres long which leads, by a staircase that is not yet cleared, to a lower story. This is composed of a long series of very small chambers, some of which extend under the floor of the peristyle. Taken in relation to the interior of the house, they are subterranean, but they are not so where they are connected with the exterior, on the opposite side, where the hill falls off very rapidly toward the street. Only two or three have been cleared near the graves in the new chapel of S. Paolo della Croce, which were, indeed, rooms on the same story. The first is a sort of narrow vestibule, with a tunnel-vault, whence some light was introduced, through two windows, into a spacious square hall with a hemicycle in the end wall. Its vault is a *vela*: that of the hemicycle is a semi-dome. In the opposite wall is a large arched opening similar to that of the apse, which communicates by means of a long narrow passage with the neighboring rooms, whose number I have not yet been able to determine.

Here was the *balineum* of the house, as that part of the large Roman house was termed which served for baths.<sup>15</sup> Such private bathing establishments could be indulged in only by the wealthiest families. They had the same general divisions and arrangements as the public baths: the *apodyterium*, for undressing and dressing; the *frigidarium* or *baptisterium*, for cold baths; the *calidarium*, for hot baths; the *tepidarium*,

<sup>15</sup> VARRO, *Ling. lat.*, IX. 68.

for resting in a moderate temperature after the bath ; the *hypocaustis* or subterranean furnace, from which pipes of metal or terracotta carried the hot water through the establishment. At the end of this room was a semicircular alcove named *laconicum*, which contained a reservoir for the warm bath called *alveus* or an isolated basin, *solium* or *labrum* for sprinkling.

The thermal hall had the pavement commonly called *suspensura*,<sup>16</sup> so named because it is raised from the ground on parallel rows of piers, two feet high, made of square bricks cemented with clay mixed with chopped hair. On these piers there rested terracotta slabs covered with a layer of *astraco*, above which were slabs of white marble decorated with mosaic. The empty space below formed the *hypocaustis* or *fornax*, the furnace already mentioned.

Such is the arrangement in the rooms of our Coelian house. The hemicycle of the *laconicum* is opened in the left-hand wall, and is of the same size as the *alveus* or bathing-tub it contains, which is in the form of a segment of a circle with a uniform depth of seventy centimetres. On one side was a small marble projection or *gradus* which served as a seat. On the right wall there is the mouth of a terracotta circular pipe with a diameter of fifteen centimetres. A parapet rising one metre from the pavement hides the bathing-place, leaving only a narrow passage descending to it. This parape' is called by Vitruvius the *pluteus*. The interior of both *alveus* and *laconicum* was lined with marble slabs, as can be seen from the impressions on the mortar.

Only a part of the raised pavement of the thermal hall has been preserved, and this is covered with very fine white and black mosaic. In the destroyed section some of the supporting piers remain : they are sixty centimeters high ; the slabs they support are five cent. thick ; the *astraco* on top of them, in which the mosaic is set, twenty cent. thick. The interior of the *hypocaustis* is entirely covered with slabs of terracotta, still black with smoke. I have not been able to find the *prae-furnium* or mouth of the furnace whence the flames passed to pervade the sub-pavement already mentioned. The heated air passed through a terracotta pipe twenty cent. in diameter, still black with smoke : traces of it remain in one of the four corners of the hall by the wall. The pipes that carried the hot air about the hall to raise its temperature have been so displaced that their arrangement is uncertain. All of the many found here were of the usual rectangular form and thirty-six

<sup>16</sup> VITRUVIUS, v. 10; PALLADIO, I. 40.

centimetres long. The *labrum*, opposite the *laconicum*, is a heavy circular terracotta basin over a metre in diameter.

The walls, vaults, and arches of all the above rooms and of those near them, which I explored but did not clear, are covered with good stucco partly fallen. No traces of paintings are visible upon any of them. The simplicity of these bathing-apartments, so different from the luxuriousness of many others, may be owing to the fact that the owners were Christians. Their present obscurity, however, is caused by the construction of the basilica whose wall cut off all communication with the exterior. Besides, there are remains of other baths of greater importance. At a short distance from those just described and on the same floor, at the point where fifty years ago the new sacristy of the basilica was built, a large thermal hall was discovered but covered in again. From contemporary descriptions, this would seem to have resembled in form and structure the finest Pompeian *hypocausta*. Its raised pavements was covered, not with mosaic but with thin slabs of white marble, while the *hypocaustis* beneath had a mosaic floor. There were marble incrustations and other rich decorations upon the walls of the main hall: these were admired at the time of the discovery though injured by the water that stood over the great part of the surface. Other neighboring halls decorated with mosaics and paintings were hardly seen, and they suffered the same fate, being first injured and then buried. I cannot determine whether this more splendid *balineum* was built when the simpler one was abandoned, or whether the two were contemporary. On the plan it has been possible to note only the first, as the second could not be examined or measured.

Another distinct part of the Roman house was often the *oculus*, a hall or a court closed and usually entirely covered by a roof or ceiling, which served as a place of recreation, for receptions, and for banquets. Its size, form, and situation distinguish it readily from all other parts of the house. Such a hall seems to have existed in this house, at least up to the fourth century. It is a spacious hall at present outside the perimeter of the basilica, though a part of it is underneath its apse. It is ten metres wide and of a length equal to the side of the house on the *Clivus Scauri* at the peristyle. Its construction is of a different period from that of the neighboring rooms. It appears to me to be much earlier, to judge by the quality of the *cortina* of inner walls, which is of excellent reticulated work. Next to it the later chambers were added, an interval of about a

centimetre being left between the walls. At no point did I find any indications of vaults, which would certainly have been visible as the wall still rises about six metres from the pavement. Hence it is to be inferred that the covering was either a gable-roof or a ceiling with a loggia above it: this is made probable by the traces, at that point, of remains of windows opening on to the street, though the part of the old wall that faced this street is now in great part destroyed. Here was probably one of those terraces called *solaria*, a fine example of which was found in a house at Herculaneum. The *oecus* must have been entered on the side of the peristyle as there is no door leading into the apartments. The many fragments of marble slabs, bases of columns, carvings, and bas-reliefs, painted stuccoes which I found here prove the original splendor of this hall. It could have been more completely reconstructed had not the constructions of the basilica extended into it. That this ceased to be the *oecus* of the house in about the fourth century is shown by three transversal walls then constructed, of which only that portion remains which is within the perimeter of the basilica. Their construction in *tufa* with occasional courses of brick, and their discord with the plan of the building, show them to be the work of a late period.

## VII. THE PAINTINGS.

All the walls and vaults of the *appartamento nobile*, the rooms, passageways, and the wings of the *atrium* were covered with paintings. Like the walls, these paintings are of various dates, some belonging to the third or even second century, while others date from the fourth, or from both periods through restorations. Eleven only of the rooms hitherto discovered have preserved to a greater or lesser degree their stucco and paintings. The earliest and artistically the most important are those in a room placed under the high altar of the basilica. The lower part of its four walls was covered, up to a height of two metres, with slabs of white marble, traces of which still remain. The entire surface above this is decorated with encaustic paintings of great richness and beauty. On a white background and standing on a green-sward are life-size genii, placed at regular intervals in front view (PLS. IV-VI). They are not entirely nude, as was the custom in pagan Roman art, though they might be so considered from a casual glance; but they wear a close-fitting seamless garment which would be invisible were not its edges apparent at the neck, the wrists, and



the feet. The arms are gracefully extended and bent as if in rhythmic dance, and with both hands they hold up the *chlamys juvenilis* that hangs quite open behind them from shoulder to knee. Behind these figures is a rich wreath of many-colored flowers, forming a festoon between each figure, and extending around the entire room after the fashion of the so-called *ἔρκαρπα*. There are ten genii, four on each of the side-walls and two beside the door leading into the adjoining room: the two that were opposite them on the other wall are now hidden behind the main wall of the basilica which here interposes. At the feet of the genii, among trees and flowering plants, are various kinds of large birds of brilliant hues—peacocks, ducks, ostriches—while others are flying through the air. Such representations of genii of both sexes with flowers and birds are frequent in Roman paintings, but I am not aware of any like this, in which the figures are life-size and form the entire decoration of the walls. The vault of this room is painted in similar style. A dark band, ten centimetres wide, separates its decoration from that of the walls. The scene is the gathering of the grapes by small genii holding baskets in their hands or under their arms and running from vine to vine gathering the grapes with a charming vivacity of motion and of pose, while birds flit among the dense foliage. A similar scene is painted in a well-known ceiling of the catacomb of Domitilla, dating from about the same time and differing only in greater accuracy of design and better preservation. For, in this vault of the Coelian house, the artist has aimed more at general effect than at delicacy of details, and the entire upper part of the subject has perished through the falling of the plaster from the ruined vault; but from the remaining fragments it is evident that the scene was there continued in the same manner as in the catacomb of Domitilla. I have termed the figures genii to distinguish these tutelary angels of men from those that guarded the female sex, called *junones*: but they may be more reasonably considered as *erotes*. Their presence in a Christian house is easily explained. They are more than a century earlier than the Christian owners, who, when they came into possession, saw no reason to efface them. Comm. De Rossi has called renewed attention, in connection with this special instance, to the fact that, up to the time of Constantine, the Christian artists, brought up in the classic school, preserved, quite frankly, its entire system of decoration, varying it to suit their taste. Whatever original position such figures as these may have held in classic mythology, their religious significance had

been quite lost in their decorative use. Tertullian himself, notwithstanding his Montanistic severity, distinguished between the images prohibited by the Mosaic law, *idolatriæ causa*, and those to which either *idolatriæ titulum non pertinebat* or else were *simplex ornamentum*.<sup>17</sup> This is confirmed in the recently discovered Arabic version of the Apostolic Constitutions published under the name of Hippolytus. In Canon XI reference is made to Christian architects, sculptors, and painters of secular works. Excommunication is launched against all who execute idolatrous figures, while they are allowed to exercise their art in matters that pertain to common life: *si quis artifex eiusmodi rem (idolum vel aliquam figuram idolatricam) confecerit, exceptis iis rebus, quæ ad usum hominum pertinent, excommunicetur donec pœnitentiam agat*.<sup>18</sup> In what precise manner this distinction was understood and carried out, during the third and fourth centuries, is shown by the *Acts of the SS. Quattro Coronati*, a document whose importance is recognized by the best critics.<sup>19</sup> These four artists, who were secretly Christians, executed at gentile request some *conchas sigillis ornatas* with images of Victory and of Cupid and even with a *simulacrum solis cum quadriga*. But, on being requested to execute an Aesclepius, they obstinately refused—*Asclepii simulacrum non fecerunt*—and this refusal was the cause of their death.<sup>20</sup> In a similar way can we explain the many mythological scenes that are seen at every step in the Christian catacombs, and at first excite astonishment.<sup>21</sup> Just as these four Christian sculptors were willing to carve Victories and Cupids on fountains, and as so many other Christians could without scruple have in their houses, for purely decorative purposes, objects decorated with pagan figures, so also could the saints John and Paul find no objection to the *erotes* decorating one of the rooms of their paternal home.

Adjoining the room just described are two others to which belongs the second of the six doors on the *Clivus Scauri*, ascending the hill. Their paintings are in a different style. In the first, the stucco on the walls had fallen at an early period and was replaced at the time

<sup>17</sup> TERTULLIANUS, *Advers. Marcion.*, II, 22; DE ROSSI, *Roma sott.*, II, 351.

<sup>18</sup> HAMBERG, *Canones S. Hippolyti arabici*, p. 69; DE ROSSI, *op. cit.*, III, 538.

<sup>19</sup> WATTENBACH, *Untersuchungen zur Röm. Kaisergeschichte*, III, 324; DE ROSSI, *Bullettino*, 1879, pp. 45-79.

<sup>20</sup> *Mittheil. der central. Comm.*, Wien, 1872, p. XLVIII; DE ROSSI, *loc. cit.*

<sup>21</sup> E. Q. VISCONTI, *Opere Varie*, I, 216; GARRUCCI, *Vetri*, tav. XXXV. 1, 8. ed. 2; DE ROSSI, *op. cit.*, *Bullettino*, *loc. cit.*; RICHEMONT DES BASSAYES, *Nouvelles études sur les Catacombes romaines*, Paris, 1870, p. 446.

of the saintly owners by another of inferior quality, which remained unpainted. The ancient painting of the vault was still intact at the time of the ruin of the house: but it now remains only in one corner of the room. The decoration consists of panels of imitation yellow marble encircled with red bands: the same design recurs at the end in the semicircular space formed by the vault; so that it would appear as if the entire room were decorated in this manner. A brick bench, raised against one of the walls before they were covered with the new stucco, has been the means of preserving a part of the ancient decoration, which is here of imitation red marble. The bench may have served as a *lectulus* or a reading and writing bench. It was destroyed by the workmen before I could save it. The room which follows, on the same axis, has a painted decoration which is still preserved on three sides. Its paintings belong to two periods, the third and the fourth centuries. The former occupy the upper part along a width of one metre and a half, the latter are below them. It would be more exact to say that these lower paintings are a restoration, as they are superposed over earlier ones that have not been effaced but only covered up with tempera colors. This may have been done with a purpose and not because the earlier fresco was injured, for that part of it which still remains is in good condition. In the judgment of Comm. De Rossi, it is probable that the reason for hiding them was that the scenes represented were too free or too pagan. That these scenes contained figures is made evident by the part of them which was not covered: besides, in certain lights, it is possible to obtain glimpses here and there of images which the second coat of coloring did not wholly hide. Of these frescoes, the frieze that encircled the room under the vault still exists in part, as well as part of the decoration of the lunette, which contains panels in white with red and black bands and frame, and, in the centre, a bunch of flowers and some figures which faded away during the excavation as the stucco beneath had been strongly affected by nitre. Where the frieze is untouched, it consists of large volutes and acanthus leaves, and in the parts restored in the fourth century are fishes and birds in the midst of a commonplace wreath of leaves. In the latter design the different style and coloring and the excessive rudeness, and the presence of fresco-work underneath are sufficient to prove that this is the work of a later hand. This is still more evident in the lower part of the decoration, two metres in height, which consists of the façade of a

building to which are adapted, with bad taste, certain geometric figures surrounded by many-colored bands or by imitation yellow marble. The backgrounds are either of pale white, or of red, which is the prevailing color in the entire decoration. The wretched technique of all these colors of the second coat is such that from day to day they are becoming ruined. When discovered they were fresh and clear, but after the earth which protected them had been removed the salt nitrates began to alter them to such a degree that but little is now visible.

Far more important are the paintings of the *tablinum*, which, in a Roman house, always received the richest decoration. Of all the rooms thus far discovered in this house it is the only one that preserves its frescoes on all four walls and on the vault, and, what is still better, preserves them in good condition. This is owing partly to the excellence of the materials, partly to the careful execution in fresco without any use of wax. Below are some architectural façades, as in the preceding room, which being far inferior may have been copied from these in the *tablinum*. For here the lines are more regular, the drawing more accurate, the colors—red, yellow, green and violet—are in better taste and arrangement. The imaginary building is crowned by small gables placed within a band which imitates the *opus isodomum*, made of cubes of yellow marble with red veinings. Above this band, which encircles the entire room, is a frieze of such richness, beauty, and grace as to place it on an equality with the best Pompeian decoration. It is made of the Corinthian acanthus, which starting from a heavily tufted plant placed in the centre, spreads luxuriantly in full volutes on either side until it reaches the next wall, upon which a corresponding decoration has been carried out. Its dark green color stands out strongly on a white ground which contrasts well with the yellow of the lower band and the red of the cornice. Above the frieze is another continuous line of decoration underneath the tunnel-vault. Its execution is so good and full of life that, were it not in fresco and on the same stucco, we should be tempted to believe it earlier by a century than the rest. At all events, it is by another hand than that which decorated the walls; by the hand of an artist accustomed to design figures, not an artisan confined to tracing outlines and coloring grounds. It is all the more unfortunate that here, as in the three preceding rooms, the upper part of the vault is destroyed, so that of this fine painting only the lower edges remain

to a height of about a metre and a half. The design is a broad ellipse with a white ground edged by six concentric bands—red, yellow, green, and blue. Similar but narrower bands radiating from the centre to the circumference divide this field into eight triangular compartments, which give to the entire composition the aspect of a wheel. These compartments are filled with figures of Christian art of rare interest, which will be described in the next chapter. The space that remains between the edge of the ellipse and the frieze on the walls is also subdivided by similar bands into compartments which contain not figures but rich foliage on a white ground, except that at the four corners there are scenic masks similar to those so often found in ancient and even early-Christian decoration. In a lunette of the vault are hippocamps hanging like lamps from a chain. This fabulous animal, half-fish, half-horse, destined to draw the car of Neptune and the Tritons, is a frequent decorative motive, sometimes in the Catacombs.

Next to the *tablinum* is, on one side, the *cryptoporticus* of the *atrium*, and, on the other, a small chamber or rather passage that leads to the secondary vestibule of the house along the side of the *Olivus Scauri*. Both have good paintings. Those of the passageway reproduce marbles of pale yellow with red veinings divided into regular compartments by red bands which imitate the outlines of squared building blocks. The adjoining passage, which leads into the other row of rooms is painted in the same manner. The vault, which in these narrow passageways is much higher than elsewhere has been almost entirely destroyed. Only a strip about one metre high remains containing small figures of animals or of winged genii or *junones* bearing wreaths of flowers. The wing of the *atrium* or peristyle, in so far as it has been uncovered, along a length of several metres has two different styles of decoration. On the right of the main door of the *tablinum* where the staircase is which leads to the floor above, is painted a *viridarium* enclosed by a cane railing over which there climb plants with leaves and flowers. The workmanship is somewhat rude and the tempera colors have become so pale that the design is hardly perceptible. The border (*zoccolo*), on the contrary, which rises a metre from the line of steps, is frescoed in red, and is of fine stucco that shines like marble. The paintings on the right of the door consist of the usual geometric patterns on backgrounds of varied colors, framed with good taste. They rise to a height of four metres, and their colors are applied in encaustic over others of an earlier date that

were in fresco, in the same way as was done in another room, mentioned above. In scraping these more recent colors, was discovered an unusual subject, which will be described in the next chapter.

The three rooms that were formed within the *oecus* of the house were also painted, but the work undertaken at this point in the fifth century in order to construct the apse of the basilica led to their destruction. Some wide strips remain at two points. In the middle room are some large frames of good style in which red predominates : above are traces of compositions with figurines in the centre and nothing more. In the next room, which is not yet accessible, are the usual imitation marbles divided into rectangles by red lines to imitate squared building-blocks. The execution is far superior to that of all the other rooms in which a similar style of decoration was used. I have already mentioned still another large room, which in the course of time came to be used as a wine-vault. Its tunnel vault is entirely painted, but the colors are so faded and ruined that it is only by moistening them that a faint idea of their design can be ascertained. Delicate and brilliantly colored lines divided the vault into compartments of various sizes and shapes upon whose white background were painted decorations and flowers.

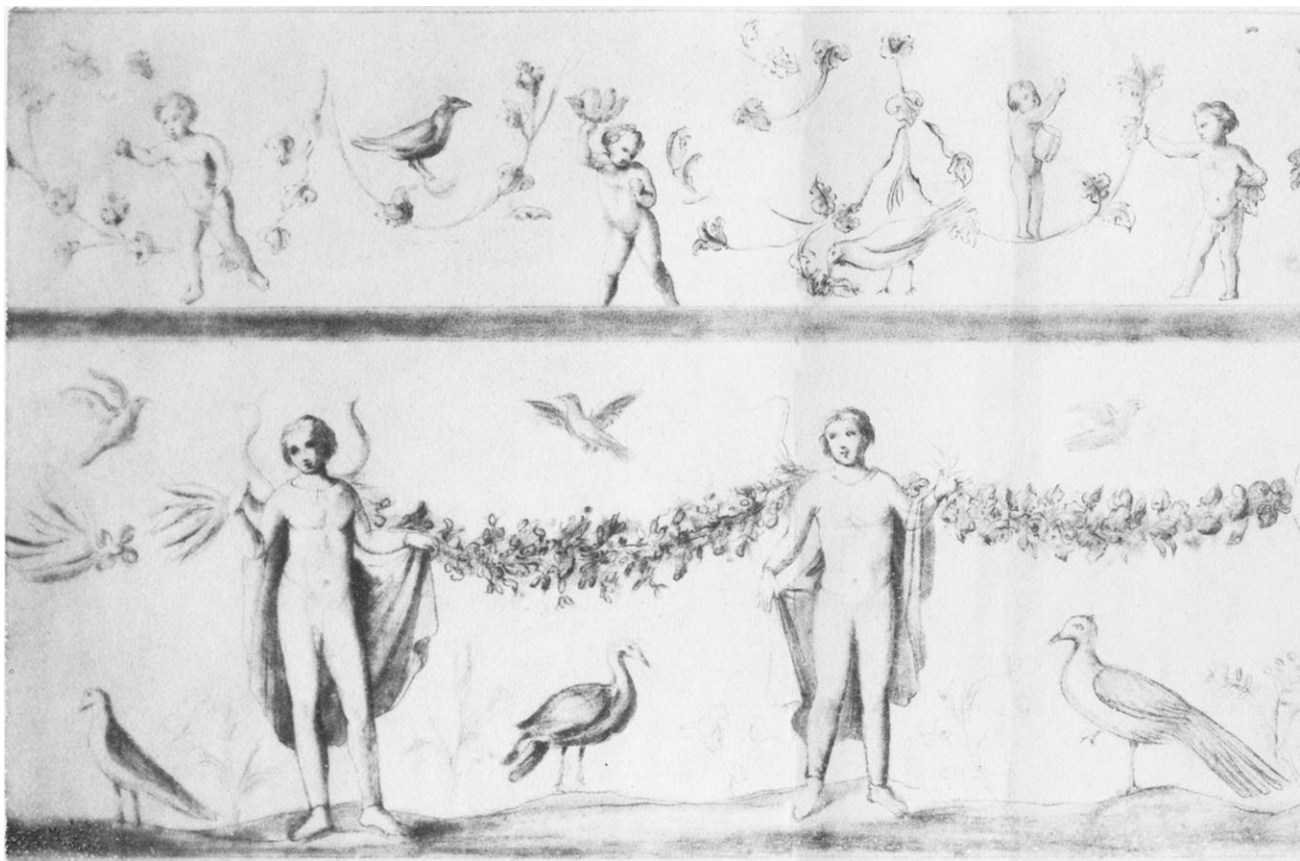
Another small room in the vestibule that opens on the *Clivus Scauri* was transformed in the Middle Ages into an oratory and adorned with paintings which will be described later. On this occasion, all the old painted stucco of the walls was not destroyed, but was left under the new coat wherever it did not interfere with the restoration. In the little that remains there appears the same brilliant red used on the border of the staircase, just described : the *cryptoporticus*, also, has a similar border surrounding it at quite a distance from the ground.

PADRE GERMANO DI S. STANISLAO, PASSIONISTA.

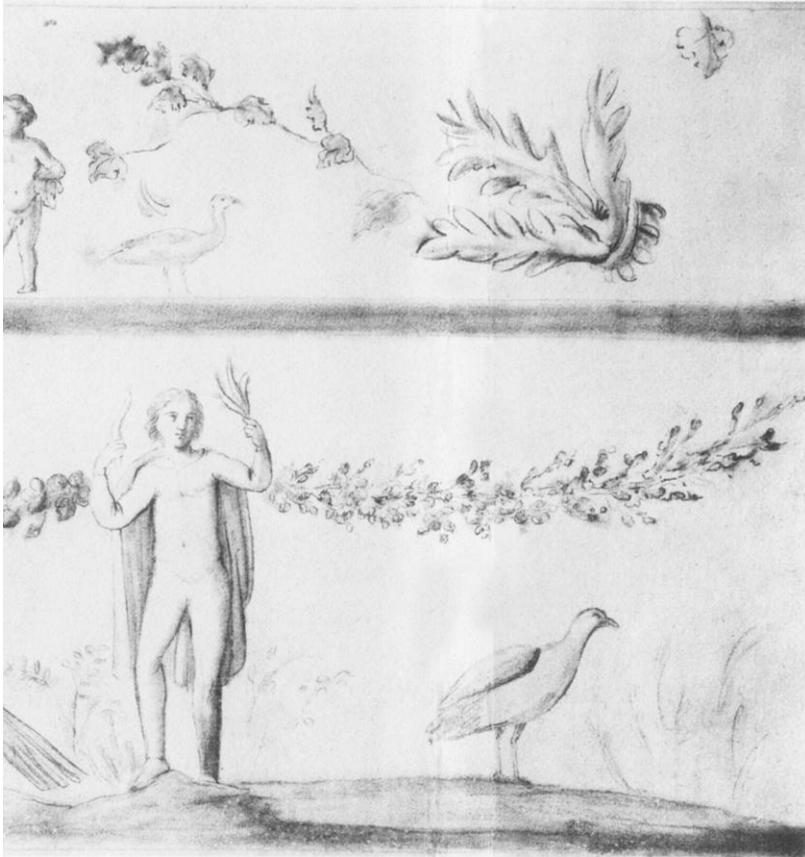
*Convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo.*

*Roma,*  
July, 1890.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

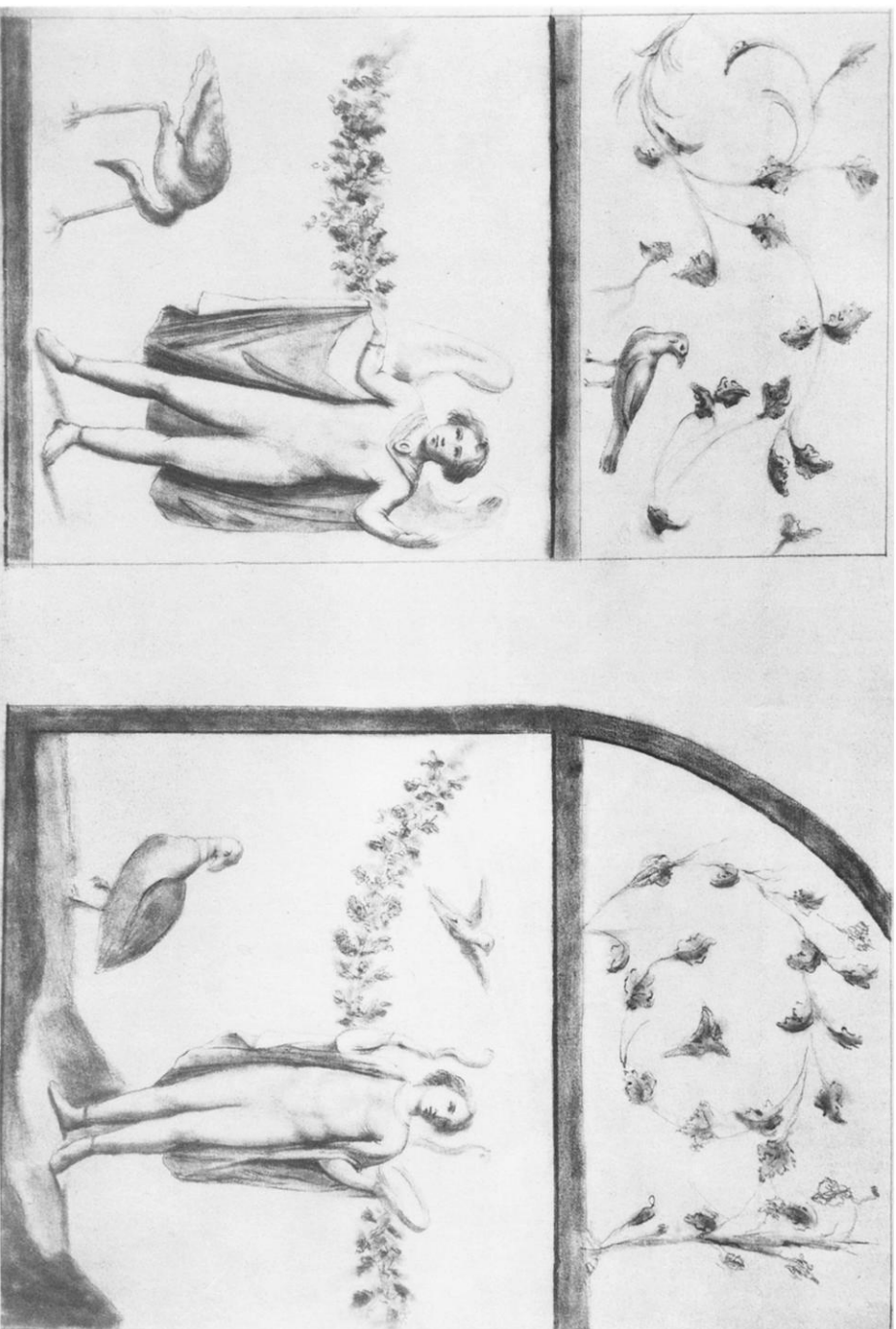


ROMAN WALL PAINTINGS: HOUSE OF SS. JOHN AND PAUL



ND PAUL, ROME.





ROMAN WALL PAINTINGS: HOUSE OF S. JOHN AND PAUL, ROME.